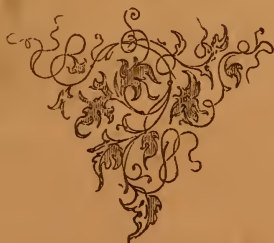


Chloe.

AN AFRICAN SLAVE.



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CHLOE.

CHLOE was born in Africa. One day she was at play with some children of her own age by the side of a river. There was a clump of trees which grew near to the edge of the stream, and from behind these they saw strange faces looking out at them as they played. They were frightened at this, and ran towards their homes, the little huts which stood not far off from their play-ground. Just then a party of white men rushed from their hiding-place behind the trees, and seizing the children, carried them to a boat which was moored by the shore.

The screams of the little girls were

heard all along the river's bank, but there was no help for them. These men were slave-catchers. As the boat was rapidly rowed down the river, the slave-ship was seen in the distance. In a little time the boat reached its side, and the children were taken on board. They were so frightened that they wished to hide themselves; but quickly they were seized and thrust into a dismal place, which they soon found was occupied by a crowd of men and women who, like themselves, had been stolen from their homes. These unhappy children shed many and bitter tears, but all in vain. Worn out with weeping, they at last fell asleep.

In the morning they were allowed to come up from the dismal place where they had slept, and walk about upon the deck of the ship. There were five little girls besides Chloe, who was the youngest, and to her the sailors gave the name

of Piccaninny. Many days they were sailing upon the wide waters, and at last they approached the coast of the United States. Landing at one of the cities, these little girls were placed upon the auction-block, and sold to whoever would give the most money for them. At this time Chloe became ill of a fever. So when the others went away with their masters, she was left behind, separated entirely from her companions. No one wanted a sick child. Indeed she was so very ill that it was supposed that she would soon die. But God had not so ordered it, and she began to mend.

After a time she too was put up for sale, and was bought by Mr. A——. His home was in Boston, and to that city Chloe was carried. At that time slaves were held in Massachusetts; but the people of that state not thinking it right that their fellow-men should be bought

and sold, soon caused slavery to be done away.

Mr. A——, who had bought the little girl, gave her the name by which we have called her, CHLOE. By what name her mother called her we do not know. For the rest of her life she bore the name Chloe.

The little slave-girl grieved very much when her companions were taken away. But the children at Mr. A——'s began to love the pleasant face of the smiling Chloe, and she also loved them.

Many things in Boston seemed to her new and strange. Africa is for the most part a very warm country, and she had never seen ice or snow. She came to Boston in the summer, and when she heard people speak of the coming winter, she was at a loss to know what was meant. When told that the water would become hard like a piece of iron, she would not

believe that such a thing could possibly be. But the winter came, and she saw the snow-flakes falling and covering the ground, and the water becoming solid ice.

Chloe's mistress told her that every day she must take the children to school, and also call for them when it was time to return home. This was a pleasant duty for her, for she loved to go out with her master's children, and by this means she saw the school. She had never heard of any thing like this before. She saw the white children sitting quietly in rows, with books in their hands, and she wondered what they were doing. She had come from a savage land, where she had never so much as seen a book. Soon, however, she began to understand. The white children were learning something every day, and she began to feel that she knew nothing. She saw them, when at home, take up their books and read to

each other, and she longed to read like them.

But how was it? was there any hope for her? She was afraid not. Yet she kept thinking about it; and the more she thought, the more she desired to learn. She did not dare to speak of it; she feared her master would be angry if he knew that she thought of it. So she kept silent on the matter, always listening when others read, and wondering if she should ever be able to do so herself.

After some time it came into her mind that perhaps the school-mistress would help her. She seemed very kind, and Chloe thought she had better make the request to her. Here is her own account of the matter, as she related it to a friend many years after.

“I ask de mistress how much she hab week to teach me, such time as I get when school out and my work done.

She say, five copper; so she would chalk down mark how many day I go, till make a week."

Chloe had now found what she most needed, some one to teach her to read. She had a little money, which had been given her from time to time, and taking this in her hand, she went to the book-seller's to buy herself a book. When he asked her, "What book?" she could not tell. She could only say that she wanted a book. She held out her money, and the man counted it. There was just twenty cents. He gave her for it a book containing the Psalms, the Proverbs, and Christ's sermon on the mount. It might not seem the best book for a beginner, but it proved in the end a great treasure to poor Chloe.

Her studies were now fairly begun, and she improved rapidly. In a little time she found herself able to spell out

a few easy words from the pages of her book. She kept it in her pocket, seizing now and then a leisure moment to try to pick out a sentence.

One day Mr. A—— saw his little slave-girl with her book in her hand; so he asked her what she was about. Chloe was frightened, but she told the truth. She confessed that she was learning to read; and seeing his anger, she trembled as though she had done some great wrong. He forbade her going any more to the school, telling her that it made slave-children saucy to learn to read. He also told the trembling Chloe that if she went any more to the school she should be hung up by her two thumbs and be whipped.

After this Chloe went no more to school. She attended the children every day as far as the door, looked in, and saw the little ones at their books,

but she knew that she must not go in. She went away with a sad heart.

But she still had her book, which she hid under her pillow. When she had time, she would take it, and carefully spell out a few words. The first entire verse which she was able to read was this:

“Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me; fight against them that fight against me.”

After this she spelled out other verses, surprised at finding her own feelings in the book. She had been stolen from her home and sold for money, and she knew this to be a great wrong. In reading these verses, she learned that there was a God above to whom she could appeal.

When Chloe came to Boston to live, she was quite ignorant of God and of religion. Little pains was taken to teach her. To be sure, she went to

church on Sundays; but not minding the preacher, whom indeed she could not understand, she received little good.

As she grew older, and became able to read a little, she grew more thoughtful. She began to realize that she had a soul to be saved. At this time there was a young girl in the neighborhood who was ill. Chloe's mistress used occasionally to send her a little broth and other comforts. One day word was brought that this young person was dying. Chloe went to the house, and saw her die. It was the first time that she had looked on death; and as she thought of the departing spirit, she revolved in her mind the question, "Where has it gone?" This solemn inquiry the poor slave-girl could not shake off.

About this time Mr. A—— removed with his family into the country. This was during the old war of the Revolu-

tion, and the sea-coast was exposed to be invaded by British troops. Many families on this account retired to the inland towns. The family of Mr. A—— removed to a pleasant country town on the banks of the Merrimac, about twenty miles from Boston. Chloe also went with them. But the solemn lessons which she had learned at the house of death still remained with her. The great question how she might please God and be fitted for heaven filled her mind.

The house rented by Chloe's master was a large one, and one half of it was occupied by another family. The head of this family, Mr. B——, was an earnest Christian. He had in his heart the spirit of his great Master, even Jesus. He saw in the countenance of the poor slave-girl a sadness which made him wish to know further about her. One morning he spoke to her.

“What is the matter, Chloe? are you sick?”

She hardly knew what to say, but answered, “Oh, sir, my mind sick.”

After a few more words had passed, this Christian friend knew that the slave-girl was mourning for her sins and seeking after God. When Mr. B—— had learned this, he invited her to come into his family-room in the evening when her work was done. On these occasions he prayed with her, and assisted her to read. He learned from her the story of her past life. She knelt often in prayer with the family, and she began to feel more than ever her need of a Saviour.

It was after one of these seasons that she returned late in the evening to her kitchen. Believing herself to be entirely alone, she fell upon her knees, and in broken accents poured out her prayer before God.

Chloe had not been so entirely alone as she had thought. On rising, she heard the sound of her master's voice. He had been sitting in the parlor listening to her all the time.

"Oh," said Chloe, when in her old age she related this to a friend, "my heart up in my mouth. I din know what to do—what I hab to suffer. But I went in de parlor, 'cause he call me. He say, 'Chloe, dis week you go to de minister, and ask him to baptize you.' I frighten'. I say, 'O, massa, I poor creature, I no fit for baptize.'

"'Yes,' he say, 'any body pray as you have is fit.'

"I 'fraid say much, 'cause I fear he angry; so, soon I could, I go up to my chamber. Den I tink, What all dis mean? Same man tell me once I should no learn read; if I do, I tie up by my two thumbs and be whipped. Same man now tell

me go and baptize. What all dis mean?"

Chloe was greatly perplexed. She knew not what to think. But she dared not disobey. It appears that at this time, at the word of her master, she went to speak with the minister, who was so well pleased with her conversation as to receive her into the church.

After remaining some months in the country, the family returned to Boston, to their former home. Chloe was now growing to be a young woman, and she bore, with all who knew her, the character of a faithful and trusty servant. As the years passed, she seemed to grow in favor with God and man. Her master had come to respect her so highly that he proposed to make her free. He said that she deserved it, and he talked a great deal about freedom for Chloe. At last he got her papers made out.

Still he was not quite willing to let her go; so when the papers were made ready, the whole was so worded that her freedom was to be not at once, but at some future time. She must, as the paper read, be a slave some years longer; then she was to be free.

But to Chloe freedom was to come in another way. In the year 1783, African slavery was done away in Massachusetts. The last remains of this wicked system came to an end; and by the laws of the state, all within her borders were made free. The gift came to Chloe in common with others.

It was not till several years after she became free, that she separated from the family where she had lived so long. She remained with them still, receiving regular wages for her services. In becoming free, she never supposed that she was to be less faithful than before, or less diligent.

While yet a slave, she had been married to a man named Cæsar Spear, and after a while she began to desire to have a little home of her own. Cæsar was also of the same mind, and after some time they went to housekeeping.

In the house of her mistress she had learned to be neat and orderly, and now she was the same in her own. Her home was a humble one, but it was thoroughly clean and tidy. Disorder in the house, littered floors, and soiled clothing were to her like sin in the heart, and must be all cleared away, the one as well as the other. In her master's house she had been noted for honesty and industry, and she was the same now as before. These were Christian duties, and in following these, she found her happiness increased. In all this she sought to serve God.

While in her master's family, Chloe

had become the mother of several children, but they all died in infancy. Of a numerous family, only one lived to grow up. Once and again she had known bitter grief in the loss of these little ones. But she knew that God had taken them, and she was not afraid to trust them in the Saviour's care, hoping to meet them again.

On becoming a housekeeper, Chloe applied herself to the duties before her. Along with Cæsar, who was a cook, she took care of a family of boarders, and also took in washing and ironing. On certain days too, while Cæsar prepared the meals, she went out to work. On these days, Cæsar having done his part through the day, Chloe would be at home before evening, and prepare a comfortable supper. Always prudent and careful, she laid aside every day from her earnings what little money could be spared.

She remembered that there were those poorer than she, and she loved to give something for the support of religion.

Cæsar and Chloe were living in hired rooms, but she had formed a plan, by saving a little every day, to gain enough to buy a house. It would be a shelter for their old age. But of this she said nothing.

Cæsar was not like her. He was fond of gay clothing, and liked to spend his money. Sometimes the thought would come into his mind that Chloe was not so finely dressed on Sundays and holidays as might be wished.

“Chloe,” he would say, “why don’t you wear silk gown; dress up smart, like udder color women?”

“Well,” she would reply with a pleasant and somewhat knowing smile, “you give me money, I can buy nice dress as well as any body.”

Cæsar would freely hand out the money, and the new dress would be bought. Chloe would choose such as was becoming her character and station, as well as pleasing to her husband. When she had made her purchases, there was always some money left, which she would put aside towards buying the house.

It took several years to bring this about, but it was at last accomplished, and Cæsar and Chloe took up their abode in the house which they had bought at a cost of seven hundred dollars.

It was an unfinished place, containing several rooms, only a small part of it being necessary for them. But as fast as they were able, one apartment after another was finished off and rented. A home was thus secured for them when they should become too old to work any more.

Soon after the return of her master's family from the country, she began to

take great delight in meetings for prayer and praise to God. She heard of certain gatherings for prayer among a few pious persons who lived not far from her, most of them members of the Baptist church, of which Rev. Dr. Thomas Baldwin, long since in glory, was at that time the pastor.

It seemed good to Chloe to cast in her lot with this people. Her whole soul was moved as she partook of the spirit of holy love and joy which pervaded their meetings. She joined this church, and continued till death a sister honored and beloved.

At the prayer-meetings which she loved so well, Chloe heard others speak of the love of God in their hearts. She felt that she also must bear witness of the same. The divine life which was in her could not be hidden. Sometimes, after listening to others, she would break

out into a strain of thanksgiving and praise to God, rendered doubly impressive by her broken words. With beaming eyes and uplifted hands she would exclaim, "My dear friends, I can wait no longer ; my cup run over ; I must speak few word." Then she would tell of the love of Christ for poor sinners, and of her own unworthiness to speak the Saviour's name, adding, "Should I be fraid to speak, de bery stones in de street would cry out."

Gifts for prayer and exhortation such as Chloe possessed, too often work pride in their possessor. That it was not so with Chloe was owing to the rich grace of God which dwelt in her. A spirit of sweet humility always mingled itself with her religious joy. Her words moved the hearts of many, as in tones softened with Christlike love she would say, "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes

lofty ; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Yet I mus speak for my dear Saviour. De *dead* praise not de Lord ; but while Chloe live, she mus praise him. She mus speak of de glorious majesty of his kingdom, and talk of his power. All his works praise him, and his saints bless him. Chloe mus bless him too ; my dear friens mus bear wid me if I speak too much."

This true handmaiden of the Lord loved to speak of the goodness of God towards her as manifested in her daily life. Of these favors from her heavenly Father she loved to speak. For favors also which she received from Christian friends she was grateful. The distinction which she made here, she was wont to express in her own manner.

"My mistress," Chloe would say, "sometimes send me wid present to lady ;

de lady say, 'Tell Mrs. A—— I very much obliged to her, and,'"—here Chloe would speak in a different tone--““I thank you, Chloe, for bringing the parcel.’ So,” she would continue, “I love my minister and all Christian friends dat try to do me good; I tank dem, but more I tank God, who gib me de blessing, and tell his children to bring it to me.”

We have said that Chloe loved these meetings for social prayer. When she left her master's family and began to keep house, it had been her great desire to invite her neighbors, especially those of her own color, to worship God beneath her own roof. But in this Cæsar was not of the same mind. He had companions of another sort, and pleasures which he chose rather than the service of God. He was unwilling to have the meeting at their home. This was to Chloe a great disappointment, but she

would not cross her companion, "Cause he de head," she would say; and so this hope was given up. But a change took place.

Not long after they had begun to enjoy living in the new house, bought with their own money, Cæsar fell suddenly ill. After a season of severe suffering, he was followed by his sorrowing wife to the grave.

Chloe was now a widow. In the great grief which had fallen upon her, she could not hide from herself the solemn truth that the departed had never been in spirit with her in the service of God. His pleasures had been of a worldly sort. She had often endeavored to persuade him to the love and service of the Saviour, but he had preferred feasting with his thoughtless companions. She had no confidence that he was prepared for heaven. She now asked, as she had

done before, concerning the departed soul, "What has become of it?" But she could only submit silently to the will of God.

In this time of sorrow Chloe was not left alone. She heard the voice of her Saviour saying, "I will not leave you comfortless." The social gathering, where Jesus has promised to be present, became to her more dear than ever.

Long had she desired to make her house a place of social prayer. Meetings were now appointed there, and they began to be largely attended. Among people of her own color Chloe was eminently useful. Nor was it among these alone that her piety was felt. To the dwelling of this Christian sister many loved to resort, and to talk with her of the heavenly world. In her history seemed to be fulfilled the promise, "Them that honor me I will honor."

It is a proof of the power of her piety, that in seasons of religious revival she was much sought after, and was sometimes invited by Christian friends to visit places at a distance. She was, under these circumstances, a messenger of good to souls. Her animated and cheery manner was specially attractive to the young. In her they saw the happy effects of the love of God in the soul.

Sometimes at the meeting for prayer, Chloe's cup would overflow, and she would begin to exhort when it was nearly time to close. When she heard the footstep of some one who was retiring, she would stop. "In heaven," she would say, "no nine o'clock bell. Dat company neber break up."

In this life of prayer and praise Chloe forgot that grievous wrong which she had suffered in being stolen from her native land. In reviewing the events of her

past life she would exclaim, "I may say *wid de Psalmist*, 'I am a wonder unto many.' Tink what God done for poor me. Jesus stoop so low, pick me up. Though I poor stranger, he pity me." In the house of her bondage she found the freedom of the soul.

Did the good which had come to Chloe afford any excuse for those who had stolen her away? Let no one be so absurd as to think this. African slavery is a fearful crime. Our own beloved and once peaceful land, drinking the blood of thousands of its sons, tells us of the divine displeasure against this fearful wrong.

Chloe was now getting in years. But before going home to paradise, there was another happiness in store for her. At this time Christians around her began to send the gospel to the heathen. In this she rejoiced to do her part. Prudence in the use of money had never hardened

her heart against the claims of charity. Always careful concerning her own expenses, she loved to give to the needy. Especially she rejoiced in the thought of sending to Africa the tidings of the love of the Saviour. Through her life she remembered with love her native land, and longed that the gospel of Christ should be there made known.

With increasing years the desire to do good seemed to increase. Chloe longed to do something more for the kingdom of Christ, before the Lord should call her home. Soon, however, it became manifest that her end was near. Suffering under a distressing illness, she saw that death was approaching. She carefully arranged all her affairs, that she might have nothing to do but to die.

A brief account of her life was drawn up by her pastor at the time of her death.

“ Few Christians whom we have known,” wrote Dr. Baldwin, “ have appeared to maintain so close a walk with God, or to enjoy so much of heaven.

“ During her last sickness, which lasted for several months, she was favored with great peace of mind. She would often, while bolstered up in bed, converse for hours with the friends who surrounded her, until her strength was quite exhausted.

“ She improved every opening to exhort her Christian friends to walk worthy of the Lord, and to live in love and peace with each other. Many wept as they heard her faithful and moving words. Death had for her no terrors. She seemed wholly given up to the will of God, and like good old Simeon, ready to depart in peace.

“ On the third of January, 1815, she gently fell asleep in Jesus, aged, it was

supposed, about 65; and on the seventh her body was committed to the family tomb of her former master." This was done at the request of his children's children, who claimed it as an honor that the remains of one so worthy and beloved should rest in the burial-place of their fathers.

Chloe left by will some amount of money. She had but one relative, a grandson. To him she gave five hundred dollars. She also left to the church some hundreds to form a fund, the interest of which should be used for the relief of the poor and sick among the colored members. That which was left she gave to the Baptist Missionary Society. She had previously given her pastor a present of one hundred dollars.

Her funeral was largely attended. Many of the church of which Chloe was an honored member were present, also

several of the family of her former master. These were the sons and daughters of the children whom Chloe, when a child herself, had attended to the school where she first saw the pupils at their books, and so formed the desire to read for herself. All of these knew and loved "Aunt Chloe."

Of this daughter of Africa it may be said, that in whatever light her character is viewed it seems worthy of study. Her life, as a shining light, reveals the pathway to heaven.

Nor should her practical wisdom in ordering the affairs of every-day life be overlooked. It is well worth the study of those who, like herself, are called by the providence of God from bondage to freedom. An example like hers carefully followed, may redeem a whole generation from the charge of being "unable to take care of themselves."

In Chloe's history we find neither idleness nor wicked wastefulness, nor precious time misspent. On the contrary, here is honest industry and prudence and faithfulness. She well fulfilled the sacred precept, "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do it heartily, as to the Lord."

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